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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/735,840	12/13/2000	Takeo Nozaki	P/1912-20	5830

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EXAMINER

SETH, MANAV

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2625

DATE MAILED: 08/08/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/735,840	NOZAKI, TAKEO	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Manav Seth	2625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 April 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-4,6-8 and 10-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1,5 and 9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-4,6-8 and 10-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 2 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to the Amendment

1. Amendment filed on 12 April 2005 has been entered in full.
2. Applicant's arguments on pages 3-6 in amendment filed 12 April 2005, with respect to the rejection(s) of claims 2-4, 6-8 and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C 103(a) have been fully considered but are moot in view of new grounds of rejection in view of Nozaki et al., European Patent Application No. EP 0,899,559 A2.

Claim Objections

3. Claim 2 is objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 2 recites the limitation "calculation of the pattern width for said inspected pattern and for the reference data **at the position at the corresponding position** by" in lines 18-20 on page 51. The limitation cited recites the phrase "at the position" which is followed by the phrase "at the corresponding position" which makes the phrase repetitive. Examiner assumes the limitation to be "calculation of the pattern width for said inspected pattern and for the reference data **at the corresponding position** by" for examining purposes. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 2-4, 6-8 and 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nozaki et al., European Patent Application No. EP 0,899,559 A2.

Regarding claims 2 and 6, Nozaki discloses a pattern inspection method and device which scans (4) the inspected pattern formed on a substrate according to the design data with the laser beam and receives the light passed through said substrate with the light receiving device (5) and, from the pattern information obtained by said light receiving device, generates the image of the inspected pattern (15) and, for coincidence between this image and the reference data (12) obtained by imaging of said design data, corrects by imaging of said design data, corrects said reference data to generate the reference image (13) and compares the image of said inspected pattern and the reference image to detect any defects of the inspected pattern (page 3, lines 35-44) wherein said reference image generation comprising provision to each pixel of sub-pixels dividing the pixel to form a matrix and calculation of the gray level of the pixel based on the number of sub-pixels belonging to the pattern developed in each pixel (Figures 2-4; page 3, line 50 through page 4, line 14).

The claim 2 further recites the limitation “calculation of the pattern width for said inspected pattern and for the reference data at the corresponding position by treating the number obtained by

dividing said gray level by the gray level step count as the width of the pattern developed in that pixel". Nozaki clearly discloses in lines 27-28 of page 4 "Note that the pattern positions of the real image 15 and the reference data 12 are compared in advance to determine whether pattern is to be enlarged or reduced". Nozaki further discloses in lines 25-26 of page 4 "Since both the enlargement processing and the reduction processing are identical in terms of the basic flow of processing, the enlargement processing will be described". Nozaki further discloses obtaining the number of gradation levels per pixel (width of the pattern developed in the pixel) by dividing said gray level by the unit gradation correction value (page 4, equation 1), where unit gradation correction value is the gray level step count (page 4, lines 31-36). Nozaki further discloses calculating enlargement correction width (considering just as a pattern width) using gradation levels per pixel (width of the pattern in the pixel) (page 4, lines 40-55). Nozaki does not specifically teach **calculation of the pattern width for said inspected pattern and for the reference data at the corresponding position** by treating the number obtained by dividing said gray level by the gray level step count as the width of the pattern developed in that pixel. However, examiner here asserts that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that in order to compare the inspected and reference pattern, the widths (or the similar features) of both patterns are required to be calculated to detect the defect. Examiner further asserts that keeping in view of the above teachings disclosed by Nozaki, it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to calculate the pattern width for said inspected pattern and for the reference data at the corresponding position by treating the number obtained **by dividing said gray level by the gray level step count** as the width of the pattern developed in that pixel, as the enlargement pattern correction width can just be viewed as a pattern width. Also, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to calculate the width of pattern if the method of calculating

the width of a single pixel of the pattern is known, it being a matter of combining all pixels of pattern to determine the total width of the pattern by using simple arithmetic operations.

Claims 3 and 7 recites “the gray level of each pixel is calculated from the number of sub-pixels belonging to said inspected pattern and, treating the count obtained by dividing this gray level by the gray level step count as the pattern width of the inspected pattern developed in the pixel, the pattern width of said inspected pattern is calculated and the gray level of each pixel is calculated from the number of sub-pixels belonging to said reference data pattern and, treating the count obtained by dividing this gray level by the gray level step count as the pattern width of the reference data developed in the pixel, the pattern width of said reference data is calculated”. Nozaki, as discussed in the rejection of claim 2, discloses the gray level of each pixel is calculated from the number of sub-pixels belonging to said inspected pattern (figures 2-4; page 3, line 50 through page 4, line 14) and both inspected pattern and reference image are compared to detect the defect and the adjust the reference image with respect to the inspected pattern. Examiner here asserts that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that in order to compare the inspected and reference pattern, the widths (or the similar features) of both patterns are required to be calculated to detect the defect and calculating the pattern width by treating the number obtained by dividing the gray level by gray level step count as the pixel width has been discussed in the rejection of claim 2. Also, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to calculate the width of pattern if the method of calculating the width of a single pixel of the pattern is known, it being a matter of combining all pixels of pattern to determine the total width of the pattern by using simple arithmetic operations.

Claims 4 and 8 recites “a reference image preparation method as set forth in claim 3 wherein the pattern correction width of said reference data is calculated from the difference between the pattern width of said inspected pattern and the pattern width of the reference data”. As discussed in the rejection of claim 2, Nozaki discloses comparing inspected pattern width and reference data width to calculate pattern correction width (Abstract; page 2, lines 30-34; page 3, lines 12-21, lines 40-41; page 4, lines 46-47).

Claims 10-12 recites a computer memory which stores the computer program, which when run on the system performs the method as recited in claim 2. A program to be used on a computer has to be installed in a computer memory before it is run to perform any methods. All other limitations recited in claim 10-12 have been similarly analyzed and rejected as per claims 2-4.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Manav Seth whose telephone number is (571) 272-7456. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bhavesh Mehta, can be reached on (571) 272-7453. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



BHAVESH M. MEHTA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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Manav Seth
Art Unit 2625
August 01, 2005